



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

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#### NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SUGGESTED FOR KERR RESERVOIR

The recommendations of the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service on the proposed John Kerr Reservoir Refuge on the Roanoke River in Virginia and North Carolina were announced today by Ross Leffler, Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

The John Kerr Reservoir, a flood control and power project constructed by the Corps of Engineers, has project lands totaling 95,500 acres.

Assistant Secretary Leffler said a report was sent on October 30, 1959, to the Corps by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife which said the reservoir is ideally located for a waterfowl refuge, and could serve as a wintering and feeding sanctuary for birds using the Atlantic flyway.

The report included conclusions reached by the Bureau in cooperation with the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the Kerr Reservoir Development Commission concerning the possibilities of zoning the lands for wildlife purposes.

Under the proposed zoning plan, 19,000 acres of land and 17,200 acres of water area of the existing project area would be made available for a national wildlife refuge. Other reservoir lands would be allotted to the Virginia and North Carolina wildlife agencies for wildlife purposes. The report also indicated that the Bureau would probably need additional land for the purpose of raising feed for the waterfowl using the Refuge.

Acquisition of the national wildlife refuge would be done in two phases. First, an agreement would be negotiated between the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Army. The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, as amended in 1958, provides authority for the Secretary of the Army to make these lands available for wildlife coordination programs. This phase would not require consideration by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. After the refuge so established had

been administered for a number of years, a determination would be made as to what private lands were needed. At that time negotiations for the needed land would be undertaken with the landowners.

In clarifying the Bureau's position today, Mr. Leffler pointed out that while preliminary appraisals have been made of several adjacent land areas, no definite decision has been reached with regard to location and number of acres needed. Also, should the new zoning plan provide for a refuge, the purchase of additional lands would be several years in the future, and the areas to be purchased would be determined upon their capacities to provide for refuge needs, and also upon the willingness of the landowners to sell.

According to D. H. Janzen, Director of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, national wildlife refuges are established to maintain, provide, and safeguard adequate types of wildlife habitat, but the Bureau is keenly aware of the Nation's increasing recreational needs. Hence, it would plan the operation of this area to be generally compatible with the current and future recreational use of Kerr Reservoir.

Boat launching, parking, picnicking and other recreational concessions, along with group activities and camping facilities, would be permissible. Nature observation, photography, sightseeing, picnicking and fishing are generally accommodated on wildlife refuges. Conflict with the present major recreational activities would be minimal as the waterfowl use would be limited to the colder seasons of the year. A portion of the wildlife refuge lands may be opened to hunting of migratory and resident game.

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